

G.F.O.A Tuesday

2005 CONFERENCE DAILY

Accountant, Author, Entrepreneur: Jim Carroll Preaches Leadership

"The world around us is changing so darn quick," Carroll said recently. "A lot of folks are resistant to change. We get into this routine."

Finance professionals, he says, need to focus on being efficient and creative, communicating with those who report to them, and advising senior officials to be aware of future trends in order to ensure the sustainability of their communities.

Carroll after he spoke to the Western Canada GFOA.

"We picked him because we wanted to get someone who could talk about change, who could talk about leadership," Esser said, adding that Carroll was likely to stimulate new thinking among GFOA members.

The fact that Carroll had worked as an accountant — which he discovered after Carroll had accepted the request to speak — is "an added benefit," Esser said.

A native of Nova Scotia, Carroll was honored as a fellow chartered accountant by Ontario in 2000.

Although he found a lack of creativity in accounting, such a back-



Jim Carroll

This emphasis on leadership dovetails with GFOA's spotlight on finance officers as leaders, a priority under outgoing president Nancy Zielke.

Jeff Esser, executive director of the association, learned about

BY JILL D'AMBROSIO

Jim Carroll wears many different hats. A self-described international futurist, Carroll is also an author, a speaker, and an entrepreneur who worked as an accountant before starting a business out of his Toronto home.

Since he left his accounting job with KPMG International in 1989, Carroll has gone on to consult with a variety of organizations — such as the British Broadcasting Corp., Motorola Inc., and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — and to advise them on global trends that affect business.

Today, Carroll will bring his message of "forward-oriented leadership" through understanding change when he addresses one of the two general sessions at the Government Finance Officers Association's annual meeting in San Antonio.

Annual Business Meeting 12:10-1:40 pm, Ballroom C, Delegates Only
GFOA Members to Vote on Public Policy Statements

The general membership will vote on two policies approved by the Executive Board:

- *Corporate Governance.* This new public policy statement supports strengthening financial accountability standards in the private sector through improved transparency, auditor independence, and accounting industry oversight. As the public sector invests more than \$2 trillion in the public markets, the quality and integrity of corporate governance is directly related to public sector retirement plans and the need to meet their obligations to current and future retirees. The public policy was developed by the Committee on Retirement and Benefits Administration.

- *Federal Tax Policy and Preserving the Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds.* This public policy statement revises five previous public statements and combines them into one streamlined position. In addition to re-emphasizing the importance of tax-exempt bonds for local and state governments, the statement reflects GFOA's concern with recent regulatory and legislative initiatives. This policy was revised by the Committee on Governmental Debt

Jim Carroll

Continued from page 1

ground has served Carroll well in his current work.

"It puts a real good business head on my shoulders," he said.

Along with his private sector experience, Carroll, 46, has also worked with both local and federal governments. From 2001 through 2004, he served on Canada's e-government committee, which made recommendations to the country's treasurer on using technology to streamline work processes and transform delivery of services. He has consulted with the Ontario government as well.

"I'm involved in virtually every type of industry under the sun," Carroll said.

In his latest book, "What I Learned From Frogs in Texas: Saving Your Skin With Forward-Thinking Innovation," Carroll warns readers to avoid the fate of a group of frogs he observed while in Houston. The frogs, busy watching a flock of seag-

ulls in the sky, were run over after failing to see oncoming cars.

The lesson, according to Carroll, is: Don't look in the wrong direction. Many of us, however, do just that by focusing on the short term, he says.

Among the trends Carroll has identified are "generational warfare," or the friction that can result when change-resistant baby boomers and younger people who embrace change work together. He also points to, a looming skills crisis among workers.

Carroll himself has been one to spot early trends. He says that he sent his first email in the 1980s and began to think about globalization during that decade, long before India and China became the industrial powerhouses they are today.

Carroll is the author or co-author of 34 books and has been on the speaking circuit for 12 years. His wife, also a former accountant, works with him. Working at home, Carroll says, allows him to walk his two young sons to school each morning. □